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Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5315th meeting

Tuesday, 6 December 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. D'Alotto
	Benin	Mr. Idohou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Li Song
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Ms. Yamanaka
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, 4 to 11 November 2005 (S/2005/716)

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05-62882 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of December, I should like to take this opportunity to pay warm tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Andrey I. Denisov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of November. I am sure I speak for all my colleagues, members of the Council, in expressing our appreciation to Ambassador Denisov and his team for the way in which they conducted the business of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, 4 to 11 November 2005 (S/2005/716)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nkingiye (Burundi), Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda) and Mr. Butagira (Uganda) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to welcome and recognize the presence among us, in the seat of the delegation of Japan, of Ms. Akiko Yamanaka, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/716, which contains the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa that took place from 4 to 11 November 2005.

I should first like to call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marc de La Sablière, Permanent Representative of France, who led the Security Council mission to Central Africa, to introduce his report. I would especially like to thank him for the leadership he provided the mission.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): Three weeks following the return to New York of the mission to Central Africa that it was my honour to lead, I am pleased to welcome the holding of this further meeting, which provides an opportunity for representatives of the countries we visited to address the Council. I should first like once again to express our gratitude to them for the reception afforded the mission in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Rather than reiterating what I said here three weeks ago, at the 5305th meeting, I should instead like briefly to point out the key lessons learned from the mission regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Members of the Council may also refer to the mission's report (S/2005/716), which addresses other matters and makes several recommendations.

The peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is on the right path. However, there are still considerable challenges to overcome. First of all, the elections in which the Congolese people fervently hope to participate will require enormous efforts, especially as regards logistics. A strict timetable must be followed between the holding of the referendum scheduled for 18 December and the legislative and presidential elections that must occur prior to the end of the transition period, namely, 30 June 2006. On several occasions during its visit, the mission emphasized the importance of adhering to that date.

Secondly, given the actions of armed groups, security in the eastern part of the country is a matter of concern, which the mission discussed at great length during its visit. Whether the armed groups are

Congolese or foreign and whether or not they pose a serious military threat, it is the Congolese people who are the first to suffer from their actions. We must therefore help the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its effort to reform the armed forces to enable them fully to address the problem. Courageous efforts have already been made in Ituri and in the Kivus, specifically in Virunga National Park. In accordance with its mandate, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is providing support for those efforts.

Establishing the rule of law constitutes the third challenge to the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government needs to demonstrate the full resolve necessary to that task. The international community, and especially the countries of the region, should offer it unwavering support.

In Burundi, the transition has been a success. The Burundians can be proud of what they have accomplished. The peace and national reconciliation process has set a stunning example for the region. Throughout our stay in Burundi, two issues were at the heart of our discussions and, I believe, remain core concerns. First, how are we to ensure the consolidation of the role of the international community, beginning with the United Nations, in the new phase that has begun following the restoration of peace? The United Nations, whose support has been crucial to the success of the transition, must now withdraw and make way for others. In that respect, the principle of gradual disengagement that we discussed recently with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has honoured us with his presence, enjoys consensus and should be supported by a commitment not only from donors and investors, but also from States of the region. That will play a very positive role in the service of peace in Burundi, and we will follow it very closely as we assess the situation.

The second issue is the problem of the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), which continues to pose a challenge. We must commend the mediation efforts of the Tanzanian authorities to encourage that movement to join the peace process. We hope that the FNL will return forthwith to the negotiating table. I recall that the Security Council affirmed its readiness a year ago to consider imposing sanctions on individuals who threatened the peace and national reconciliation process. I believe that, should the Government so request, the members of the Council should be prepared to follow through.

Within the framework of the resolution adopted on Burundi and of draft resolutions now under consideration by the Security Council, our mission has drawn a variety of conclusions since its return. It was very fruitful both in keeping the Council better informed and in allowing it to send clear messages. I reiterate that I was most honoured to lead the mission. I believe that Council members will be pleased to hear the reactions of the countries of the region.

The President: I invite members of the Council that wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month and to thank and congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation for a very eventful presidency last month.

The Great Lakes region of Central Africa is a geographical expression with shared history and culture among the people, but without formal institutional links among the countries of the region. In the past decade, the region has been afflicted by internal and inter-State conflicts with regional destabilizing consequences that have threatened international peace and security and accordingly drawn the concern of the Security Council.

The conflicts in the region have now turned a critical corner towards resolution through the combined initiatives of the countries of the region, the African Union and the United Nations. The sixth consecutive visit of the Security Council to the region confirmed the positive developments in the region. However, as is the case in such protracted conflicts, there are still major challenges which the Security Council and the countries of the region, individually and collectively, must continue to address.

The major achievement this year has been the successful democratic transition and installation of an elected Government in Burundi. The United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) ushered in the final stage of the transition after 10 years of difficult negotiations and instability in the country. The main mission of ONUB has been accomplished, but the Government of Burundi and ONUB have agreed to continue working together as the Government

consolidates its authority and ONUB gradually withdraws.

The Government of Burundi is on the path of national reconciliation through dialogue, power-sharing, judicial initiatives, reconstruction and development. There is scope for ONUB to assist the Government in building administrative and judicial capacity in those areas. In the security sector, ONUB should continue to assist the Government in completing the programme for disarmament and demobilization and the integration of the new armed forces and the establishment of a new police force.

While the security situation has improved considerably in most of the country, the civilian population in Bujumbura Rural and in some of the western provinces is experiencing intermittent threats from elements of the PALIPEHUTU-Forces nationales de libération (FNL), which are not yet part of the new democratic dispensation. ONUB's presence in those areas is still required to assist the Government in protecting its citizens. Refugees are returning in large numbers from neighbouring countries; therefore, their safe return and reintegration should remain priorities. Tanzania is ready to work with the Government of Burundi and the United Nations in facilitating yet another attempt to bring the Palipehutu-FNL into the mainstream of Government and politics in Burundi.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations has undertaken one of the largest and most complex transitional and stabilization operations in its history. The electoral process and timetable are on course, with a deadline of 30 June 2006. At the same time, the United Nations and the international community are helping the Transitional Government to build administrative and governance institutions, including institutions for promoting human rights and the rule of law. In a vast country like the Congo, with a long history of civil strife and the virtual breakdown of the institutions of governance, the protection of civilians ought to be given equal attention and priority as the country heads towards democratic elections for the first time in over 40 years.

The reform of the security sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is crucial to the unity of the country and the stability of the Congo itself and the Great Lakes region as a whole. Commendable progress has been made in disarmament, demobilization and the creation of an integrated new national army with the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and bilateral international assistance. Six integrated brigades have been formed, with three more to be added soon and a target of 18 brigades before the end of the electoral timetable.

The formation and administration of the new army have still to be streamlined to ensure professionalism and morale and to reinforce the national character of the army. The speedy formation of the high council and the implementation of the recommendations of the European Union Mission of Assistance for Security Sector Reform are necessary to create a well-equipped modern army and police force.

The new national army should be in the vanguard in addressing the problem posed by the presence of foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR) represent a growing threat to the Congolese civilian population, a persistent challenge to the authority of the Transitional Government in Kinshasa and a chronic threat to neighbouring Rwanda and the stability of the region. Reports of the continuing presence of PALIPEHUTU-FNL armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a possible link to the FDLR, point to a further destabilizing factor for Burundi and the region. There are also still some armed foreign groups and local militias in the Ituri region and the Kivus which should be contained and neutralized. The armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported by MONUC, have demonstrated a remarkable ability to engage those forces, as in the recent operation in Ituri and the Kivus. The recent request from the Tripartite Plus One countries — that is, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi — for more robust support from MONUC to enable the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet this challenge should be urgently evaluated and responded to by the Council.

The other major challenge is the neglected humanitarian situation in the region. It is reported that over 1,000 people die from conflict-related causes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo every day. Over the last six years, more than 3.8 million people have died in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from malnutrition and diseases resulting from the war. Remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army in northern

Uganda have, over the years, caused large-scale displacement and continue to threaten the security of the civilian population and humanitarian workers.

The dire humanitarian situation compounds the graphic history of the genocide that claimed nearly 1 million lives in Rwanda in three months during 1994, and of the hundreds of thousands of refugees that have been in such countries as Tanzania for several decades. The Security Council should promptly provide the needed leadership to the international community in addressing this humanitarian challenge. As refugees have started returning in large numbers to Burundi and to some parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, adequate assistance should be given for safe return and integration in their respective areas of origin.

In retrospect, the Security Council has gone through difficult and trying times when its response contained mistakes and shortcomings. But it did not hesitate to learn from those experiences and has improved its response and the implementation of its mandate in the region. The Council has the confidence of the Governments of the region and a willing civil society ready to work in partnership with the United Nations.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the recent mission to the Great Lakes region, led by Ambassador de La Sablière, reflect the hopes and aspirations of the peoples and the Governments of the region. The Council should encourage an intensified United Nations system-wide sustained response and catalyse the support of the international community for the countries of the region in their defined areas of concern and priority. Preventing new conflicts, consolidating the peace process and stabilizing the region through peacebuilding should be the shared agenda of the United Nations and the countries of the region. Tanzania would like to carry forward this agenda during its presidency of the Council next month.

The President: I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Council, to thank the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the part it plays, particularly in acting as host to hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Let me at the outset, Sir, congratulate you on behalf of my delegation upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to pay tribute to Ambassador Denisov and to the members of his delegation for their successful guidance of our work in the past month.

Let me also thank Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière for the way in which he led our mission to Central Africa and express our satisfaction at the positive outcome that the mission generated.

During the Security Council's recent consideration of the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (S/5005/728) (see S/PV.5311) we had the opportunity to confirm the sense we got during our visit to the region of both considerable progress and many remaining challenges on the way to restoring peace, stability and progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. The restoration of peace and stability no longer seems to present an insurmountable challenge, and with perseverance on the part of the key players on the ground and with the resolute support of the international community, there is reason to hope today that the transition in those two countries will be successfully completed.

For this to happen, the of 30 June 2006 deadline for the end of the transition period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must definitely be met, so that we can deprive those who would be tempted to rekindle the fires of crisis of any pretext for doing so. We urge the Government of National Unity and Transition to make up for past delays in reform of the security forces; to resolve the material difficulties facing the national army and police; to speed up the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the integration of the national armed forces; and to extend State authority throughout the territory.

On the eve of the 18 December constitutional referendum, which will be a genuine test case for the ongoing transition, inclusion and transparency must be the hallmark of the electoral process in its preparatory and organizational phases in order to ensure the credibility of the outcome and to ensure the legitimacy of the resulting institutions and strengthen their chances to resist and survive any disputes.

We commend in this respect the enthusiasm of the Congolese regarding the voter registration process. This is an indication of their support for the elections and confirms the importance they attach to the electoral timetable in meeting their expectations in the security, policy, economic and social areas.

Given the size of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the preparation and organization of these elections, which will be the first in over 40 years, is fraught with many logistical and communications problems specific to that country. This will be, in and of itself, a challenge; the international community needs to contribute to meeting it. In that connection, we pay tribute to MONUC for the efforts it has undertaken to address these difficulties. We urge the Transitional Government to establish the conditions for successful elections by accelerating the issuance of an electoral timetable and ensuring that it is met, and by ensuring the timely adoption of an electoral law that will do away with exclusion and ensure compliance with the rules of democratic competition, including in the area of transparency and freedom of expression.

In the security area, we believe that the presence of the militias and foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the country is an additional reason for concern regarding the future of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regarding stability in the Great Lakes region overall. We welcome the robust stance taken with respect to them by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the support of MONUC, as well as the efforts undertaken by the countries members of the Tripartite Plus One Commission to enable the Transitional Government to disarm these groups and ensure that they are repatriated. We urge the countries of the region to respect the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide their full cooperation to the Group of Experts established under resolution 1533 (2004).

Burundi, for its part, has now begun the crucial phase in peacebuilding and reconstruction of the country, following the successful conclusion of the transition process and the installation of democratically elected institutions. The difficulties it continues to face will make it a top candidate for the Peacebuilding Commission when that body is set up. Right now, the support of international partners and the assistance of the donor community are key for enabling peace to take root in the country in a durable fashion.

By setting out the priorities of their plan of action, the new authorities have demonstrated their resolve to directly tackle the sources of conflict and work to establish peace and democracy, promote national reconciliation and fight impunity through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the special chamber of the judiciary, which needs to be modernized and refined.

We regret the refusal of the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) to sit at the negotiating table and participate in the peace process. We believe that everything must done to persuade that movement to cease hostilities and to contribute, working with the elected authorities, to the reconstruction of the country.

While we fully support the Government's request to adapt the United Nations presence to the new realities of the country, we believe that recent history and the still fragile nature of the situation favour a prudent approach to the international community's disengagement from Burundi. However, the Security Council must reflect on the modalities and conditions of a gradual withdrawal of ONUB that would enable the Operation to continue to fulfil its mandate in an effective and orderly fashion in close cooperation with the Government of Burundi.

Furthermore, my delegation is encouraged by the engagement and the determination of the authorities of Uganda to continue to take measures needed to ensure the security of humanitarian assistance and aid in the north of the country.

We regret that the Conference of the Great Lakes Region has been postponed, and we hope that the spirit that inspired its preparation can be maintained in order to ensure the Conference's success.

Finally, we welcome the initiatives taken by MONUC and ONUB to enforce respect of the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse within those missions, and we encourage them to persevere in that direction.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to extend to you, Sir, and the delegation of the United Kingdom our congratulations and best wishes for success during your presidency of the Security Council. We also wish to thank Ambassador Andrey Denisov and the delegation of the Russian Federation for their excellent work in the presidency of the Council during the month of November.

I take this opportunity, first, to thank the Ambassador of France for his leadership in the Security Council missions to Central Africa. In the almost two years that Brazil has been on the Council, we have been able to participate in those visits, and we are pleased to note that during that period, there has

been tangible progress in the situation of the region. We are also pleased to note the importance and the usefulness of those missions for cultivating more positive relations between the Council and the Governments and political actors of the region, including members of civil society. We believe that, above all, it is essential to underline the advantages of dialogue between the Council and the countries of the region, now that the regional perspective has been adopted as the most effective method for action taken in Central Africa by the Council and the international community.

The regional component was at the heart of the peace agreements of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. It was the leaders of the region who found the best balance leading to the ceasefire and the subsequent peace negotiations. Therefore, regional leaders must continue to provide counsel to the Security Council, not only because they know the problems of the region very well and because they are most directly affected by the consequences of war and the benefits of peace, but also because a great share of the challenge of achieving a lasting peace in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to depend on regional cooperation, for example, in addressing the issues of the control of armed foreign elements in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and trafficking in arms and in illegally exploited mineral resources.

Likewise, finding lasting solutions for the problem of access to land and that of the high density of the population of Burundi has to begin with collective efforts in the interest of all neighbouring countries.

I am very satisfied to note the progress made to date on preparations for the International Conference of the Great Lakes region. The Council's mission to the region was able to inform itself of that progress, and we congratulate the representatives of the countries members of the Conference for their efforts to find combined solutions in which not only the issues of peace and security but also the issues of social and economic development receive attention, because there can be no lasting peace as long as the current economic and social structures remain in place. We are all aware that the pace of work must be kept up and that all participants in the process, including the donor community, must fulfil their commitments and work for the early holding of the second summit conference.

To conclude, I underline my country's confidence in the political authorities and the leaders of the entire region and in their commitment to lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The next six months are very important, and we hope that the Council can continue to extend its support in constantly close coordination with regional leaders. I am certain that the African representatives on the Council, with the assistance of the Secretariat and in collaboration with other Council members, can find the best way for the United Nations to continue to play its important role in achieving peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring Burundi.

The President: I now turn to those speakers who will participate under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Rwanda, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption by the United Kingdom of the stewardship of the Council for the month of December and to wish you every success in that endeavour. You may count on my delegation's unreserved support. Our congratulations also go to Ambassador Andrey Denisov of the Russian Federation for his outstanding presidency in November.

Furthermore, I wish to express my delegation's commendation to you, Sir, for convening this meeting, following the visit by the Security Council to the Great Lakes region of Africa last month. Allow me also address my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Jean Marc de La Sablière for his very successful leadership of the mission and for the comprehensive report on the Council's mission (S/2005/716).

Security Council missions to Africa have provided an unmatched opportunity to discuss with the leaders of the countries visited progress achieved and ways forward in finding durable solutions to longstanding peace and security challenges on our continent.

During its visit last month to the Great Lakes region, the Security Council had another opportunity to witness positive political developments in Burundi and reaffirm the Council's determination to accompany the

transition of the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards its peaceful conclusion through a transparent and democratic electoral process, which is to be concluded on 30 June 2006.

While my delegation appreciates the Security Council's efforts to lend continuous support to political processes aimed at ending the conflict crises that have so destructively affected the countries of our region during the past decade, it is our belief that the Council should adopt a more conclusive approach towards the underpinnings of the perpetuation of instability in the Great Lakes region so as to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity.

It has been more than obvious that peace processes in the region have been consistently undermined by the unrestricted military activities of the negative forces operating on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from where they have been carrying out deadly armed attacks in neighbouring countries and regularly committing untold atrocities against innocent civilian populations. As far as Rwanda is concerned, it is needless to remind this body that the instability along our border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the past decade — created by the uninterrupted and unhindered military activities of the ex-Forces armées rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe — could not be addressed in an appropriate manner, despite the numerous appeals made by my Government to the international community to work out solutions to put an end to that continued threat.

Surprisingly, the Council has, time and again, taken the position that those negative forces had to disarm voluntarily. My Government's reservations as to the efficiency of such an approach have been vindicated by the paltry results achieved so far in causing the negative forces to effectively disarm. Their leadership has, all along, been adamant in its refusal to respond to the multiple — albeit lenient — appeals from the Council, while fiercely obstructing those who have attempted to disarm and go home. That approach has resulted in the political and military consolidation of the negative forces and in unwelcome and recurrent tensions among the countries within the region.

My delegation wishes to place on record our satisfaction with the Security Council's recent position that the voluntary disarmament of negative forces has reached its limits and that it can no longer be advocated as an efficient way to dismantle the networks of armed groups, as expressed in the presidential statement issued on 4 October 2005 (S/PRST/2005/46) and emphasized during the Council's most recent visit to the Great Lakes region.

Beyond that very important new stand, however, there is a need for decisive and speedy action to follow if we are to turn that mere will into a tangible outcome. Past experiences in that regard have proved that failure to match political will with resolute action has served to strengthen the negative forces' resolve to carry out their initial destructive plans. The Ituri course of action taken by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has instead proved that sustained pressure, combined with forceful measures, can help to annihilate these networks of spoilers. My Government is convinced that that such an approach could have the same outcome if it is extended to and intensified in the areas where the ex-FAR/Interahamwe are deployed.

Here, I should recall that, in their meeting in Kampala on 21 October 2005, the Foreign Ministers of the countries of the Tripartite Plus One Joint Commission unanimously called upon the Security Council to consider giving MONUC a more robust mandate so that it could embark on forceful disarmament of the negative forces. A letter was jointly conveyed to the President of the Council transmitting specific language to legitimize that aim. That joint endeavour created a momentum that needs to be fully sustained by the Council, including by devising more solid strategies to deal with the issue of disarming the negative forces once and for all.

My delegation looks forward to the draft resolution currently being considered by the Security Council as an unprecedented breakthrough in that regard. We anticipate that it will be specifically and unequivocally devoted to resolving the question of the disarmament of the negative forces. In that respect, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to call upon the Council to diligently consider the proposals made by the representatives of the Tripartite Plus One Joint Commission countries so as to come up with a truly strong and purposeful draft resolution. The countries in our region are more than ever resolved to work together to find a durable solution to the question of the disarmament, repatriation and reintegration of their nationals held hostage by the hard-liners leading these armed groups. A purposeful and action-oriented draft

resolution would greatly complement that regional momentum. I wish to reiterate that Rwanda, for its part, has set up all the necessary arrangements for the reception and reintegration of those who would be returning to their countries. I wish to take this opportunity to express our most sincere gratitude to those in the international donor community who have been providing, and are still willing to provide, assistance in that connection.

I cannot conclude my remarks without referring to the list recently published by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I should like to state that that list falls short in terms of comprehensiveness. It cites two individuals from the leadership of the Forces démocratiques pour le libération du Rwanda. We understand that those two individuals are part of a much larger group, which has been constantly acting in violation of the measures provided for in resolution 1596 (2005). We hope that the draft resolution under consideration will help to address that concern and that it will impose the contemplated measures not on a limited number of individuals, but on the armed groups or entities to which they belong. That would be one concrete measure that could contribute efficiently to their disarmament.

In conclusion, the added value of the Security Council's visits to the Great Lakes region is certainly self-evident. Allow me to underline, however, that their relevance would be greatly enhanced if they helped to generate real momentum for the resolution of problems facing our region. The disarmament of negative forces is a key problem. It is my Government's strong view that this year's visit will have value to the extent that it assists in coming up with effective and workable measures to put an end to the actions of the negative forces, including the ex-FAR/Interahamwe. We look forward to next year's visit as devoted to celebrating the success achieved in that respect and to an exchange of views regarding other constructive agendas.

The President: I now call on the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): At the outset, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and also to congratulate your predecessor. I shall be brief.

First of all, I would like to commend and thank the Security Council delegation that visited the region, in particular Uganda. Let me place on record our praise for the able leadership of the Ambassador of France, who led that important delegation.

Uganda is concerned at the presence of negative forces on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The negative forces comprise both local militias in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have failed to integrate and that pose a threat, and foreign rebel forces. Action is needed to deal with these negative forces. Uganda expresses its concern that the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is functioning as a preserve for them: they are there, they are preserved, and nothing is being done to deal with them. Obviously, their presence continues to pose a threat to the region as well as to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Therefore, we welcome recent moves by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to head up forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to deal with these negative forces.

Recently, as a result of the operations of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in Ituri against the local militias, some of the armed groups fled to Uganda. I am glad to say that Uganda responded quickly by arresting and disarming them. That shows the cooperation Uganda is extending in that regard. We therefore, would welcome equally robust action by MONUC with regard to foreign rebel forces on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, the proposed draft resolution before the Council to address the issue is most welcome.

Our request, as contained in the letter of the Ministers of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission, referred to by the representative of Rwanda, was specific in giving MONUC a robust mandate to disarm those negative forces.

However, there may also be a problem where MONUC may not be able to directly disarm those people. Therefore, the possibility of empowering the forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and strengthening their capacity to handle the situation, assisted by MONUC, would be welcome. Uganda would welcome that assistance, if the job can thus be accomplished.

Our bottom line is that those people must be obliged to disarm. The era of voluntary disarmament has passed, but that does not also mean that the door is closed to those who wish to voluntarily come forth. In that regard, Uganda has established an amnesty office in Ituri, specifically for those who respond to voluntary disarmament. We are prepared to receive them and resettle them at home. But there must be a cut-off period, beyond which those people must obligatorily be disarmed.

I am pleased to report that within the framework of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission and within the framework of joint verification mechanisms, the region has moved quickly to address the issue of negative forces. There has been the proposal to establish a joint intelligence cell, wherein the countries concerned can share intelligence. There is a proposal by Uganda that there should be established, within the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, liaison officers who would primarily deal with the intelligence issues, as well as other issues, to locate these people and recommend how they can be dealt with.

With regard to the situation in northern Uganda, I will have occasion to address that when the issue of civilians in armed conflict is before the Council. But let me say this, the Ugandan Government is now addressing the issue of the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. It is not as alarming as it is sometimes portrayed. The Ugandan Government is providing security escorts for humanitarian convoys to deliver relief, but it has also taken steps to decongest the camps. Seven hundred internally displaced people who are in the camps, are now being resettled. There are arrangements to take them back home. We appeal to the international community to assist in resettling the people, because they need tools, such as hoes and others, and seeds in order to resettle. That process is under way.

I would just emphasize that the camps were established only temporarily, as a protection measure. We are conscious of the fact that conditions there are not good and the camps should, therefore, be gradually disbanded.

Lastly, there is the issue of the rebels who were loyal to Koni — the fanatical rebels. I think that faction is more or less coming to an end. With the cooperation of the Sudan, those who remain within the region and are terrorizing people are being dealt with. Soon, we hope, the countries of the region will cooperate with Uganda to execute the warrants of arrest that were issued against the top leaders of that ferocious group.

I want to thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Nkingiye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to see the British presidency in the Council during the month of December, which brings the year 2005 to an end. We are also very happy to commend the excellent work accomplished by the Russian presidency, during which the Burundian Minister for Foreign Affairs was able to address the Council on 30 November last.

The Security Council mission last November to Central Africa, under the enlightened guidance of the Permanent Representative of France, bears witness once again to the importance the Security Council attaches to peace and development in the countries of that region. It has added momentum to the peace process in my country, Burundi.

As for the recommendations of the mission to the Burundi Government, which appear in the report under consideration (S/2005/716), I have a few comments to make. Regarding the progressive disengagement of the peacekeeping presence of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), the effort to combat impunity and the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, I would like to say that an agreed road map between ONUB and the Government of Burundi was referred to the President of the Security Council, dated 23 November 2005. The contents are set out in an official Security Council document S/2005/736.

As Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi stated clearly on 30 November, the gradual disengagement will be carried out in an orderly and reassuring manner starting 1 January 2006 (S/PV.5311).

Areas where cooperation with ONUB is still necessary have been identified. Among others is support for the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as well as support for transitional justice with regard to the

setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the creation of a special court.

Concerning the forum of partners to support reforms provided for in the Arusha agreement and mobilizing international assistance for the reconstruction of Burundi, the Government hopes to take advantage of a donors conference to be organized in the second half of February 2006, during which our priority programmes for reconstruction and the revival of the economy for 2005-2008 will be presented. We hope our partners will be highly committed to the success of that conference.

With regard to the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), as His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi said during the Council's stay in Bujumbura, we would like to reiterate the willingness of the Government of Burundi to find a peaceful solution to that question. In that context, we again call upon the regional initiative for peace in Burundi, the Security Council and friendly countries to exert their influence in order to convince the FNL to return to the negotiating table.

In parallel, the Security Council should follow up appropriately on the correspondence addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 21 October 2005 from the Tripartite Plus One Joint Commission relating to the involvement of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the disarmament of the negative forces operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the FNL.

The peace process in Burundi has reached a point of no return, thanks to the joint efforts of the regional initiative, the mediation and the United Nations, and in particular to the outstanding role played by the United Nations Operation in Burundi. The people of Burundi are now expecting the dividends of that process.

Reconstruction and sustainable development are pivotal during this post-conflict period. We call on the international community to support Burundi in addressing that challenge. My Government hopes also that Burundi will benefit from the activities of the soon-to-be-established Peacebuilding Commission.

The President: There are no more speakers on my list.

Today's discussion has expressed a broad welcome for the work of the mission. I think that there are three conclusions which I might try to draw.

First, I would note the strong endorsement by Council members of the recommendations set out in the mission report. The task now is to work together to mobilize the endeavours of the United Nations as a whole, along with the countries of the region, to give substance to those recommendations.

Secondly, let me stress the importance of the elections process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the need to respect the time-table and address the security issues, including the persistent threat to civilians posed by armed groups. That will be the subject of a Council draft resolution.

Thirdly, there is a need to work closely with the new Government of Burundi as it establishes itself and moves forward towards a new, peaceful era. But building peace is a process which will require a commitment by all of us, not least by the United Nations, in support of the efforts of the Government.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.